

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Dear Members of the Hearing Panel,

I am writing this letter as part of the investigation into scholastic dishonesty by Haishan Yang, specifically that Haishan used Artificial Intelligence tools to write his doctoral preliminary examination in health economics. I am a health economist and an Assistant Professor in the Division of Health Policy and Management at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, where Haishan is currently a PhD student. I received my PhD in Health Policy (Economics Track) from Harvard University. Prior to my doctoral work, I earned a BS in Economics (second major, Community Health) from Tufts University and worked as a Research Associate at the Urban Institute's Health Policy Center. I joined the faculty at the University of Minnesota in 2019.

As part of the health economics faculty in the Division of Health Policy and Management, my responsibilities include grading the health economics preliminary exams. In the five years that I have been at the University of Minnesota, I have graded preliminary exams for eight students (including Haishan). When a student submits an exam, each member of the health economics faculty grades the exam independently; then, the faculty convenes and we compare our assessments. Outside of the doctoral dissertation itself, the preliminary exam is the most important component of our doctoral degree program. The preliminary exam is an opportunity for doctoral students to demonstrate mastery over the subject matter and is a required step to continue to the dissertation phase of the program. As such, students typically spend several months studying for the exam after completing their formal coursework. I met with Haishan several times before the preliminary exam to help him study in the months leading up to his exam.

Given the importance of the preliminary exam for our doctoral students, I take the responsibility of grading preliminary exams very seriously. I read Haishan's preliminary examination in detail when he submitted it in August. After careful review of his exam, I came to the firm conclusion that he used a Large Language Model such as ChatGPT to write his exam, even though the exam instructions expressly prohibited the use of Artificial Intelligence tools. The evidence underlying my conclusion is detailed in the report submitted to the Office of Community Standards (OCS) by the health economics faculty (Drs. Ezra Golberstein, Peter Huckfeldt, Hannah Neprash and Caitlin Carroll). I will not restate the evidence in full in this letter, but I will highlight that there

were several cases where Haishan's responses to the exam questions matched word-for-word with ChatGPT's responses (when ChatGPT was prompted with the same exam questions). Beyond instances of exact language matching, there were also cases where Haishan's responses included obscure or nonstandard content that was also included in ChatGPT's responses. Given the evidence detailed in the report to OCS, my unequivocal view is that the preponderance of evidence shows that ChatGPT was used in the writing of this preliminary exam. I do not make this allegation lightly, and I reviewed Haishan's exam many times before drawing this conclusion.

If I can provide more information that would be helpful for evaluating this case, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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